

"THE ALLEGATION, A HISTORY OF THE REBELLION"

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TOYS/GAMES

Curios and Relics

Toys & Games

"The Myriopticon"

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection



For the People

A Newsletter of the Abraham Lincoln Association
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Another Curiosity from the Henry Horner Lincoln Collection

By Kim Bauer

As the curator for the Henry Horner Lincoln Collection it is part of my job to oversee the maintenance of the various artifacts. Recently I was going through boxes in order to prepare for the move of the collection to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library when I was struck by an object. It was a box, but not an ordinary one. Upon further inspection I realized that we had an item from a toy collector's dream. Its title is "The Myriopticon, A Historical Panorama of the Rebellion." The maker is the standard of toymakers, Milton Bradley. The date of original manufacture seems to be 1868.¹ Inside the box is a long scroll that turns by wooden dowels/paddles. The scroll contains images of the Civil War taken from the pages of *Harper's Weekly*. Such familiar war scenes as the "firing on Fort Sumter" and "The Sharp-shooter" by Thomas Nast grace the scroll's pages.² Oddly enough, there are no scenes that depict individuals. For example, there are no illustrations of Abraham Lincoln, Robert E. Lee, or any of the great military or civilian leaders of the conflict. While the scenes themselves tend to rely more toward the Union side of the war, one can only surmise that Milton Bradley, like any good businessman, did not want to limit sales to any one region of the country by possibly offending another region. Remember, the manufacturer's date was 1868.

The object was both history lesson and educational narrative for the children. One can just imagine children scrolling through the scenes and narrating them to their proud parents.

Indeed, the box itself is designed to look like an Elizabethan stage. This would be in keeping with Milton Bradley's philosophy. He believed that games should not only entertain but also be educational. An early advocate of the American Kindergarten movement, Bradley also published the first American book on the subject, *Paradise of Childhood*.³

showcase some of these most unusual toys and games that were manufactured in response to the period of the Civil War and to Abraham Lincoln. Until then, please enjoy what the wonders of the new technology can afford and view the aforementioned Websites, preferably with a child. After all, Milton Bradley would have wanted it that way.



"The Myriopticon, A Historical Panorama of the Rebellion," was manufactured by Milton Bradley in 1868, and can be found among the many items in the Henry Horner Lincoln Collection

This toy is just one of a number located in the Horner Collection. Included in the collection are puzzles, a set of original Lincoln Logs, dolls, models, and games, including one of the most unusual games concerning Abraham Lincoln known to exist, *Parlor Monuments to the Illustrious Dead*.⁴ It is the intention to eventually have an exhibit at the new Abraham Presidential Library and Museum to

¹Owing to a dearth of toy-making reference works at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, the author has relied on online sources. Please see *The United States Civil War Center* at www.cwc.lsu.edu for the date of manufacture. To find the date, click on the Website and go to the Search page. Type in the term *Myriopticon* and it will take you to the relevant page.

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An Interview with Professor Richard J. Carwardine

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Christianity which underpinned the ethical stance of most Unionists, and which flourished especially in New England and its "Yankee" diaspora. But he proved able to use the power of that constituency to rally support behind his national vision and the war's purposes.

It is worth stressing that historians have rarely given due attention to the Northern "home front," though there are honourable exceptions and the general picture is now belatedly changing. I hope I have something new to say about how Lincoln worked (through his party, the army and the religious institutions) to sustain morale throughout the Union—an essential ingredient in the North's ultimate victory in a protracted and gruelling conflict.

6. What do you hope the reading public will remember about this biography?

First and foremost, that it was enjoyable to read. Beyond that, I hope to have persuaded readers that Lincoln, in his encounter with slavery and secession, blended a breadth of moral vision with active, attentive, day-to-day political management; that his political career can only be understood by attention to his evolving and unorthodox religious ideas, and to his use of religion as a means of securing his political ends; that, though largely confined to the White House, he proved an effective and imaginative communicator; and that, though he made tactical mistakes, he got the strategic decisions right.

7. What is your next project?

I have an inaugural lecture to give in Oxford next year: Lincoln will be at the heart of it. But my main project now is a book on religion in the construction of the United States, from the Revolution to the Civil War.

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²For a wonderful viewing of all the scenes depicted in the game, please go to the Internet site at www.lib.virginia.edu and enter the term *Myriopticon*. This will take you to the Paul Mellon exhibit, "Slavery and the Civil War." Here you can view the entire scroll and the various images contained in the toy.

³For a good basic history on Milton Bradley, his company, and his philosophy about educational games, see www.quadrangle.org. The History Channel has further information concerning Milton Bradley at www.thehistorychannel.com. The printed work that was consulted for this article is, James J. Shea Jr., *The Milton Bradley Story* (New York: Newcomen Society in North America, 1973).

⁴For a wonderful article concerning this game as well as other related items, see Thomas F. Schwartz, "Grief, Souvenirs, and Enterprise Following Lincoln's Assassination," *Illinois Historical Journal* 83 (1990): 259-64.

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